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■ Tekst 11

Wedding Superstitions & Traditions

When it comes to Weddings, everyone's superstitious. Even if you're the kind of person who walks under ladders on point of principle, or laughs their socks off when friends touch wood, you can bet that, when your wedding day dawns, wild horses couldn't stop you clutching something old and donning something blue. And that's just for starters. We guarantee that you wouldn't dream of seeing your fiancé on the morning of the wedding. And will you expect to be carried across the threshold? Of course you will!

But where do these old traditions come from?

Well, some can be traced back to Roman & Anglo Saxon times, some to Victorian rhymes and others to folklore that has been passed down through countless generations.

All of them are to do with bestowing good luck and fertility on the happy couple.

The Time & The Place

Sunday used to be the most popular wedding day, as it was the one day most people were free from work. Puritans in the Seventeenth Century put a stop to this, however, believing it was improper to be festive on the Sabbath. Today, Saturdays are the busiest, despite the rhyme

*Monday for health, Tuesday for wealth, Wednesday best of all,
Thursday for losses, Friday for crosses, Saturday for no luck at all*

As for the time of year, the saying 'Marry in the month of May, and you'll live to rue the day' dates back to Pagan times. May, the start of summer, was dedicated to outdoor orgies (ie the summer festival Beltane), hardly the best way to begin married life! Queen Victoria is said to have banned her children from marrying in May, and Nineteenth Century Vicars were rushed off their feet on April 30th because Brides refused to marry during May. The sun has always been associated with sexual stimulation and, therefore future fertility. In Scotland it was traditional for the Bride to 'walk with the sun', proceeding from east to west on the south side of the church and then circling the Church three times 'sunwise' for good luck.

Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue and a Silver Sixpence in her Shoe

This rhyme originated in Victorian times. 'Something Old' signifies that the Couple's friends will stay with them. In one version of the tradition the 'Something Old' was an old garter which was given to the bride by a happily married woman so that the new bride would also enjoy a happy marriage. 'Something New' looks to the future for health, happiness and success.

'Something Borrowed' is an opportunity for the Bride's family to give her something as a token of their love (it must be returned to ensure Good Luck), and 'Something Blue' is thought lucky because Blue represents fidelity and constancy. The custom began in ancient Israel where brides wore a blue ribbon in their hair to symbolise their fidelity. A sixpence was placed in the shoe to bring the couple wealth in their

married life. Some brides still place a penny in their shoe during the marriage ceremony.

Dressing Up

Until the Nineteen Hundreds Brides hardly ever bought a special Wedding Dress, opting for their best outfit instead. Green was always avoided, as it was thought to be unlucky. To say a girl 'had a green gown' also implied that she was of loose morals, because her dress would be grass-stained due to rolling around in the fields! Hence 'Marry in Green, ashamed to be seen'. White Dresses were made popular by Queen Victoria, who broke the tradition of royals marrying in Silver. Symbolising purity and virginity, white was also thought to ward off evil spirits. Other traditions are that the bride should never make her own dress, that the final stitch should not be completed until she is departing for the Church and that she should never try on the entire outfit before the day. This was because it was felt dangerous for the Bride to count her chickens. For the same reason, a Bride should never practise signing her new name until it is legally hers, and wedding linen was marked with the Brides maiden rather than married initials. The tradition of Bridesmaids is evolved from the custom of surrounding the Bride with other richly dressed women, in order to confuse evil spirits.

Flower Power

Flowers have always been a big feature at Weddings. The Groom is supposed to wear a flower that appears in the Bridal Bouquet in his button-hole. This stems from the Medieval tradition of a Knight wearing his Lady's colours, as a declaration of his love. Each flower has its own meaning and can display a special message. Orange Blossom, for instance, signifies chastity, purity and loveliness, while red chrysanthemum means "I love you."

Food for Thought

The Wedding Cake was originally lots of little wheat cakes that were broken over the Bride's head to bestow good luck and fertility. Today's three tier Wedding Cake is based on the unusual shape of the spire of Saint Bride's Church in London. Traditionally the newly-weds should make the first cut to signify sharing their life. Every guest then eats a crumb to ensure good luck. And sleeping with a piece under her pillow is said to make a single woman dream of her future husband. The giving of almond favours is connected with the motto: 'A gift of five almonds represents health, wealth, long life, fertility and happiness.' The throwing of confetti, meanwhile is an ancient fertility rite. Handfuls of grain or nuts were traditionally thrown because they are 'life-giving' seeds. In some European countries, eggs are thrown instead.

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- 1p 39 Blijkt uit deze tekst waarom er bruidsmeisjes met de bruid meelopen? Zo nee, antwoord "Nee". Zo ja, schrijf op onder welk kopje deze informatie te vinden is.